

R E P O R TON THE FIRING ON AND PLUNDERING IN THE HARBOR OF HONG KONG
BY THE JAPANESE TROOPS OF THE SHIP "SVIRSTROY" BELONGING TO
THE FAR EASTERN STATE SHIPPING AGENCY, IN DECEMBER, 1941

The Military Prosecution Office of the Pacific Ocean Area established by investigation the following:

That since July, 1941, the ship "Svirstroy" had been overhauled in the docks of the English company "Pampy-Dock" at Hong Kong, and by the beginning of December 1941, she was 80-90 per cent ready.

On December 8, 1941, the Japanese troops made a surprise attack on Hong Kong from the North and drove the English troops defending the town back to the Victoria Island.

In order to avoid the Japanese troops mistaking the Soviet ship for an English or American one, the crew led out the ship "Svirstroy" to the roadstead and put her far from the other ships, keeping at a distance of 200 m. from the shore; large state flags with the inscription "The USSR" on them were painted on the roof of the round-house and on the boards.

Although it was obvious that what the nationality of the ship "Svirstroy" was and that she belonged to the Merchantile Marine of the Soviet Union the Japanese planes twice bombed her, but without any results. After this on December 18, the Japanese forces began artillery ranging from the shore batteries and opened gun fire on the ship "Svirstroy." Five shells directly hit the hull of the ship, considerably damaging her and the deck-structures.

The 3rd mate Kovernikov and baker Elagin were killed during the bombardment.

During the Japanese bombardment of the ship the crew sailed in boats and landed on the Japanese-held-shore, where the Japanese troops put them under guard and took to the zone under the fire of English batteries on Victoria Island.

Stoker Krivoruchko was killed and sailor Bochkov badly wounded during one of the bombardments. The Japanese did not render Bochkov any medical aid in due time.

Notwithstanding their lawful requests to the Japanese command to transfer them to some safe place, the Soviet sailors were forced to stay in the zone under the artillery fire during the whole time of fighting.

During and after the fighting the Soviet sailors were kept like prisoners in the area surrounded by barbed-wire and under guard of the Japanese soldiers.

As the crew of the ship "Svirstroy" had left the ship during the bombardment, they could not have taken food and personal belongings with them, for a month the Japanese authorities did not allow the Soviet sailors to return to the ship assuring them that the ship was guarded by them. But when the Soviet sailors succeeded to

get there, they found out that the Japanese flag had been hoisted on the ship and the Japanese had given her a trophy number. It also turned out, that besides the damage done by the artillery fire, the principal parts of the engine and of the stokers room were covered with rust, there were about 200 tons of rainwater in the holds; the ship equipment, machinery, food and personal belongings of the crew were stolen by the Japanese soldiers.

The ship was put out of commission but the Japanese authorities responsible for the bombardment and the plundering of the ship, refused to compensate the damage caused by them to the Soviet Union and to her citizens.

Those of the crew of the ship "Svirstroy" who had left the ship before the bombardment and stayed on the Victoria Island, were constantly subjected to various indignities and were robbed by the Japanese soldiers when the latter occupied the island.

Because of the hostilities on the part of Japan the ship "Svirstroy" had to stay in Hong Kong and having been damaged by the bombardment and plundered she sank afterward. She could not have been led away into a Soviet port because of the hostilities.

The amount and the articles of the plundered property are specified in the act

MILITARY PROSECUTOR OF THE PACIFIC
OCEAN AREA LIEUTENANT-COLONEL OF
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CERTIFICATE OF TRANSLATION OF THE ABOVE DOCUMENT:

I, M. GILDENBLAT, hereby certify that I am thoroughly conversant with Russian and English languages: and the above is a correct and true translation of the indicated document.

Signature: /s/ M. Gildenblat